

LEAF-SHADOWS
AND ROSE-DRIFT

BEING LITTLE SONGS

FROM

A LOS ANGELES GARDEN

By Olive Barlow





Class PS3531

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AND ROSE-DRIFT

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A LOS ANGELES GARDEN

BY OLIVE PERCIVAL



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No. 1.

TO
CLARISSA GRAVES PERCIVAL
WHO LOVED A GARDEN IN THE BERKSHIRE HILLS
AND TO
HELEN MASON PERCIVAL
WHO LOVED A GARDEN IN
THE MIDDLE WEST

The Down-hyl Claim,
Los Angeles, 1911

*And now my joy I in my garden take ;
I want not wealth nor power ;
Through life's long hours, I'll stroll and think
and pause
Before each little flower.*

T'AO CH' IEN,
Fourth Century A. D.

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SPRING

THE DISTURBERS

My garden is a quiet place ;
It 's strange I cannot read :
But O there are so many dreams
And visions one must heed !
The roses whisper, whisper ; and all the
 towhees talk ;
Then O the dancing shadow-leaves on the
 mossy walk !

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Throughout the year, with ev'ry dress,
With veils of light, of haze, of gloom,
She wears her regal bridal-wreath
Of Eden-scented orange-bloom.

STAR-RISE

The radiance of the young, young world is
paling ;

Grove and garden forget to sing ;

For through the spring-scented twigs of gray,
gray fig-trees

Glow the white ev'ning star of spring !

IN POSSESSION

Skies and hills and trees are mine ;
O the beauty of the Spring !
Day of fragrant quietude ;
Night of silences that sing !

THE CHEROKEE

Through the lilac mist of April twilight,
My roof gleams white with its fairy-snows
That, under tropic sun, melt all too quickly !
O wonder-beauty ! O magic rose !

REHEARSAL

The little flow'rs in the sweet and spear-
straight grasses

Devoutly nod and sing, in primal ecstasy ;

All 's repetition of Botticelli springtimes,

Of southern Aprils long ago, in Italy !

APRIL

O ! when the great sky is blue, blue, blue,
And the winds blow straight from the sea ;
O ! when the canyons are sweet, sweet, sweet
With the springtime's old pageantry :
It 's then from under a roof we must, sing-
ing, wander far, —
Forgetting sphinxes and riddles, from dawn
to sunset-star !

BABY BLUE-EYES

Not for the sunshine-daisies
But for you all my praises,
Tenderest flowers of blue !
Eyes o' my dear dream-children,
Wet with the tears of spring dew !

THE NEW MOON

Above the gum-tree's silhouette,
In sky of pale, pale gold,
Night lifts an Indian silver ring,
Her broken bracelet old !

THE BEAUTY OF GLAZENWOOD

Sunrise sky and the sunset sea
Are here in the heart of this my inconstant
 rose ;
All youth's glamor and youth's appeal !
Does beauty suffice, O rose of a day ? Who
 knows ?

ALIEN SPRING

The high, high hills, the green, green hills,
The snow-white clouds from the western sea
Are now my metaphor of spring;
But once it was the anemone !

BROKEN TRYST

Through the white dawn-mist of April,
(A bird sang somewhere near !)
To the old rose-tree I hurried ;
I called — O did you hear ?
I touched a red, red rose — the petals shed ;
Then — then I remembered that you were
dead !

OUTSIDE

The beauty of April's miracle
Once brought ecstasy ;
But since I'm by joy forgot, it is
Formal pageantry !

IN THE FOOTHILLS

On a wonderful day like this,
The first of the spring,
Do you know, O My Love, a song
That is perfect enough to sing ?

O My Love, O My Love, alas !
The beauty of spring,
Though in every rose and vine,
Is in none of the songs men sing !

On a radiant day like this,
The first of the spring,
Only flowers and clouds and birds
With adequate gayety sing !

HER SYMBOLS

Gardenias are hers and the orange ;
Jasmine and the long fairy-lace ;
The daphnes ; magnolias ; tuberoses ;
Lilies of a mystical grace !
Sweet, sweet, sweet are Her Flowers !

Bride-roses are hers and the daisy ;
Wake-robins and dawn-flowers pale ;
Azaleas that glimmer like moon-mist ;
Iris and the shy virgins-veil !
White, white, white are Her Flowers !

SUNSET SKIES

My garden is flaunting ten thousand roses
But perverse am I : I love the best
Those heavenly fields of azaleas, iris,
Now abloom for all, above the west !

EMBERS

Laugh not at me, Little Children,
For I'm as young as the Spring !
See the red silk of the prune-tree !
The sheen of the blackbird's wing !

LILACS

Sweet are the lilacs of that far-off spring;
Sweet is the voice of one long dead!
Fragrance of lilacs to my heart must bring
Pain honey-sweet, uncomforted !

GARDEN MAGIC

April-night and my garden tell their secrets
to me,

For I watch by the pool, beneath a dead
olive-tree.

White-magic is learned from an imaged star ;
And sorcerer's spells from the basil-jar.

But it's heigh-ho ! It's heigh-ho ! I none dare
tell,

But the white birds and blue moths, at matin-
bell !

THE CHARM GIVER

As I was hurrying up Life's hill,
Once on a May-morn fair,
With all my dreams and in search of Joy,
I met with Goody Care.

She waylaid me with horror-tales
And took my toys from me ;
But then at parting she gave a charm,
Called Perfect Sympathy !

THE FAVORITES

O there are roses white in my garden,
White as a bride-dress, white as a shroud ;
And there are flawless roses beside them
Pink as a shell is, or sunrise-cloud !

O there are roses red in my garden,
Redder than war is, redder than wine !
But yellow roses, yellow as sunset,
They are the roses that I call mine !

THE MIRACLE

My heart was full of painted toys,
The dreams of dreams and childish joys ;
Forlorn, forlorn, forlorn was I,
When Love came !

But miracle : my world made new !
New stars, new dreams that all come true !
I 'm singing, singing, singing now
Since Love came !

YOU

You are akin to the singing morn
And to the peace of noon ;
O you are one with the burning sun
And with the wearied moon !
Many-mooded as sea or fire :
Only you are my one desire !

RELEASE

Song of bird and pinkest dawn,
Scent of rose in air !
Over seas my love is gone
And I do not care !

Old, old call of chanticleer,
Maids bid me arise ;
I must up and sing, for fear
Of my Mother's sighs !

THE ROSE-ARBOR

White boughs, white boughs,
Bent with the Maytime snows ;
White heaped the path :
Drifts from a Banksia rose !

MAY NOON

The little parks have lost their Eden-green ;
The town 's all a blatant show !
Where is the wonder of the almond-bloom ?
O where did the Springtime go ?

SUMMER

UNDER THE TREES

My garden has many whisperers
And gossips very, very dear ;
(Their charm the graceless only can forget !)
O every time I listen I
Leave off the old, subverting fear
And cease to be but a marionette !

JUNE

When the pepper-tree trails her lace in the
dust

And the roses rest ;

When at dawn and at dusk the frogs whir in
tune

And the rain-gods jest :

It is June, white June !

THE PLUMBAGO HEDGE

I wake and with bewildered eyes
Behold the summer, noonday skies,
Lying in little blossom-flecks along the wall;
It is a sign for me, I know,
Of many heavens here below:
Radiant, tender harmony awaiting all!

TREES AFTER DARK

Close against the old, old mystery
Of the blue night-sky,
Stand black and tall the eucalyptus trees ;
They sway like marching spearmen in the
 breeze ;
And aloof, like idlers, live-oaks stand,
Watching them go by !

THE HUMMING-BIRD

Did you see, did you hear that green glint
of 'a bird,

The pomegranates over and under ?

O a garden is ever, each day in the year,

A place of Edenic, sweet wonder !

LOST

For a little mountain-brook, snow-cool,
Through these desert-years I grope;
But all is mirage, mirage, mirage
And deliria of hope!

MAGNOLIAS

Brimming with the sweet of a tropic summer
Are the blossom-cups white of the magnolia-
tree ;
Drugged with dreams are they of enthralling
sorrows,
Of incredible joys,—by a far, far, moonlit
sea !

MY HILL

Between the brown and oak-plumed hills
Is the hill of my dreams, desires ;
All day a realm of blue, blue mist
And at sunset all opal fires.
Ah! the feet of the heedless its paths have
 found ;
But for me it is ever forbidden ground !

SILENCED

Last night, the gray bird sang by its nest
In the jewel-green camphor-tree ;
The nest now is cold ; silent the bird ;
O the pain of death's mystery !

DISILLUSIONED

Time's poet and lover find June-days sweet ;
Yet are they sadder to me
Than twilight pools where dead autumn-leaves
float ;
Than sobs that die in a violin's throat ;
Or winter's white pageantry !

ENVY

I would that I were an early riser,
Up and alert before dawn ;
Then would I know the long story
That you, my dear Morning Glory,
Hear from that bird on the lawn !
I would that I were a flow'r — and wiser !

JULY

Bleached the hills and the river-bed ;
Brown the mesa, where linnets sing ;
All the days are white glare, white dust.
O the mists and the dreams of Spring !

HANDICAPPED

The nosegay Life handed me at birth
Is such a crude, crude thing and strange, —
All odorless, thorny, gaudy flow'rs!
Who but a god dare rearrange?

UNDER THE JACARANDA TREE

At all times of the year, is my garden a place
Where for me many miracles come to pass ;
Into flowers to-day, the blue sky I saw
change :

Jacaranda flowers upon the grass !

DISLOYALTY

With gay nasturtiums embroidered o'er,
Is Summer's dusty, dusty gown ;
Lobelia-blue is her jeweled belt ;
An oleander-wreath her crown !
All sweetness, brightness ; yet we tire of her
 perfection
And dream of winter verdure, with unfair
 affection !

THE PIONEER

Nobody knows his name to-day
But far greater than soldier or king was he ;
As in this land of blighting sun,
For the future he planted a tree, a tree !

A COUNTRY ROSE-HEDGE

White dust of a rainless summer
And chill of the fog at night
Are hard to endure,
O Roses !
But winter 's a gleesome mummer
And all of these months of blight
His masked smile shall cure,
Poor Roses !

ESCAPE

All the hills around were high, were high ;
But the sea-fog broke the dream ;
And the snow-white bird flew by, flew by !
See how pale the death-lamps gleam !

FAVORITISM

Mourning-brides, daisies, sweet-johns and
pinks

And pretty-maids, pansies, snow-on-the-lea;
All, despite the white glare and neglect,
Are blooming so gayly, daily, for me !

LIFE

An awkward scramble ; then
A song of shrill delight ;
The dangers of the nesting-time ;
At last, when comes the resting-time,
A wounded, silent flight :
The fate of birds and men !

FOREST FIRES

A summer of white dust-smother ! Meads
All silence ; the foothills bleaching weeds !
Garden and bee are dead and pools are dry !
Pray ! Pray ! For devil-fires enflame the sky !

AMARYLLIS

O the world it withers in the desert-wind ;
(And three moons away is the rain !)
The wild-gourd vine swaggers through the
 roadside-dust,
Too content with its white domain.
In my brown, drear garden, is a sudden pink :
(Not a rose on vine nor on tree !)
'T is a row of lilies and without one leaf !
O adorable bravery !

A CHOPIN NOCTURNE

A dark, cool night and over-sweet
With tuberose breath ;
A jeweled javelin in the heart :
Ecstatic death !

CLOWNS

O the goggled hop-toads are fat, old clowns !
All day, in a fern-bed so cool, do they loll
 and wait
And rehearse their joke ; but at dusk, attired
In spotted, green silk, how alert and import-
 unate !

THE LILY-POOL

I have heard of a lake, where great ships
sail ;

On whose shores twenty cities take their
pleasure !

I am hid in a garden, to reflect

One white lily, a lonely woman's treasure !

CONVALESCENCE

As content and as still as a lizard of bronze,
On the terrace I lie,
With beautiful, rhythmic dreams.
Is it true I once followed the rush of the
town ?
And ne'er looked at the sky ?
How droll and remote that seems !

BREATH OF THE WEST

White nights, white days drift by ;
And the summer goes
Under a fleckless sky ;
The sunset-sunrise breath
Is of greasewood, sage !
O the mere scent-of-rose
Who 'd buy ? Not I ! Not I !

AUGUST NIGHTS

The garden's parched and dusty flow'rs
Grow sweet, grow cool with dew ;
The country silence sings and brings
Serenity anew !

RETROSPECT

There is one thing more, more futile
Under the moon, under the sun,
Than to water dead, dead rose-vines :
It is to weep, when love is done !

MOONRISE

The splendor of the southern summer-moon,
 new risen,
Appalls like seraphim, between the trees and
 hill!
Unworded, old, ancestral joys and fears
 awaken!
In adoration, all the little birds are still!

SABBATH

I have for mine a hidden sanctuary
And there my spirit, on its knees,
Can say a rosary of joy's renewal,
Beneath the ancient, patient trees !
Ever-soothing, ever-healing is their paternal
 voice ;
And, made sweet by garden-stillness, my soul
 can sing, rejoice !

DEFEATED

I would that my life were the life of a rose,
Mere serenity my brief, brief lot ;
And then when the summer is ended for me,
Who will know or grieve ? I'll be forgot !

SUMMER VIGIL

The silent, midnight lily-garden is a place
Of rest, of dreams exalted, through the moon-
white hours,
Of Night's great beauty ; but alas ! one hears
the sigh
Of Springtime's vanished and forgotten little
flow'rs !

AUTUMN

WINTER'S APPROACH

The tea-rose hedge has such young, red
leaves;

O Summer-blinded, come out and see!

O hear the song of the desert-wind,

In praise of rain, of fertility!

SEPTEMBER AFTERGLOW

The foothills are nearer (such great, brown
beavers !)

And arroyo and canyon are lakes of lilac
mist ;

The tree-spires rise deeply blue on the mesa ;
And the mountains encircle with chain of
amethyst !

AUTUMN VICTORIES

The geranium-seed, with white wings spread,
Is flying far, far, far, — now it at last is free !
The chrysanthemums bold are parading
In a triumphal, a final felicity !

DO YOU REMEMBER

Do you remember
That long-ago September ?
The autumn-leaves all wet with rain ?
The autumn-daisies in that old lane ?
I remember !

Do you remember
That desolate November,
When autumn-leaves repeat the words
Of Love, who died ere flew the birds ?
I remember !

LIFE'S PATCHWORK

Here a hope and there a hope ;
Some songs and dreams are there ;
Here are fears and there are tears,
Failures and a prayer !

Here a flower, there a star ;
And here of joy a shred ;
Here a grief and there a grief ;
Over-wide the bed !

THE POET AND THE PHILO- SOPHER

“O what is so great as The Beauty of
Life?” He asked of The Sage.

“Its loneliness only, Dear Child; for thy
soul’s a lark in a cage!”

OCTOBER AFTERNOON

The petals of the flow'r of time, the year,
Are falling, falling ;
Paler the sun ;
The sweeping, unseen winds and mists of
fear
Are calling, calling,
My youth is done !

THE SECRET

Last May, I filled the blue hawthorne-jar
With fragrant leaves from bush and from
tree ;

It is the tomb of a girlhood's joy;
And yet I call it a pot-pourri !

NOVEMBER

Brown, brown, brown is the arroyo, —
Hill-encircled, misty, gold !
Little leaves whirl and float in the breeze ;
Leopard-alisos gleam through the trees ;
Still, still, still is the arroyo !
O allurements manifold !

DISCIPLINED

I took my heart and I made me a god ;
Home was its name and 't was fair to see ;
But life, the despot, as tribute claimed it.
I 'll not appeal from the tyranny !

MYRTLE

In my garden of bright, tranquil hours,
In the gloom of the old live-oak tree,
There are shining some small, starry flow'rs,
Dimly blue like a mist-covered sea.
Their name and their fame is in many a
book;
And yet how demure, deferential they look !

UNFORGETTING

When they dissect my heart and my brain,
Do you know what they 'll disclose ?
Merely a farewell kiss in the rain
And a fragrant brier-rose !

THE LAST ROSE

Sunshine pale and the sea-wind
Touched my head ;
Life was begun.
Pink my heart glowed ! Then rains fell,
I was dead
And summer done !

THE MEADOW-LARK

The praise of the shy, little meadow-lark
Rings with certitude ;
Her tone is all Orient-pearls and gold ;
Supreme beatitude !

RESIGNATION

Since her young eyes did close in sudden
sleep

My life's a cloudy night o'er long, its dewy
flowers scentless ;

Through starless solitudes I plod alone.

They say the dawn will compensate for lone-
liness relentless !

SUNSET CLOUDS

The lost armadas of my lost years
Majestic float to a saffron shore ;
And now at dusk they furl their red sails
And drift in seas where no breakers roar !

OUTLIVED

Deep, deep, deep the love of my life is
 buried
Beneath heavy years of care ;
Immortelles nor willows the spot adorn not
And no angel watches there !

NOVEMBER'S ROSE-DRIFT

The heaped-up petals are sweet, beneath the
 blight ;
All dying, dying
That which was a rose !
Mere reminiscence the voice-of-earth to-night
And sighing, sighing
Of a great repose !

WINTER

THE FIRST RAIN

O the ground is rose-pink with the wet coral-
beads

Lost by our old pepper-tree,

When she joined in the dance of the wind
and the rain !

Pardonable gayety !

WINTER TWILIGHT

The Marechal Niel roses hang heavy with
rain ;

Visitor-robins are singing ;

And from the dispirited passion-vine old

Yellow-jade lanterns are swinging !

THE REMEMBRANCER

Under my window, a green carpet is spread ;
No sacred prayer-rug and yet
Precious it is : for on that day in Mid-March
You planted this mignonette !

A WINTER MORNING

O the rain, with her lute and her mandolin,
Came last night a-singing !
And the garden made merry, her rosy bloom
On the paths a-flinging !
Now vanished the singer ; yet come and see
The sun-jewels sparkling on grass and tree !

THE PAST

The past is a darkened corridor,—
Echoing, chilling, haunted
By Memory's bats and her dragon's roar;
(Horrid with ooze and slime is the floor!)
Who is the man not daunted?

TRANSMUTATION

When first I heard my Mother sing,
The tone was silver, white and fair !
But now the silver all has crept
From out her voice and o'er her hair !

IN THE RAINY SEASON

Long, long day of winter rains
That sob and sob and drip, drip, drip like
tears !

Perfect joy such gloom might be,
Sweet with roses, melody !
But O the silent, the estranging years !

VALUES

The day was a disappointment,
A weariness, a sorrow ;
But gazing at the afterglow
Brings courage for the morrow :
Personal griefs reduce to proper size,
Under the high and tranquil ev'ning skies !

ASHES OF ROSES

And was this the bright image of my flow'r-
decked shrine ?

Hollow brass fire discloses !

Desolation surrounds : can I forget my faith
And the ashes of roses ?

A RAINY SUNDAY

Long, long day of tears and silence,
Of gloom, of rain ;
Someone's day of joy and sun ;
My day of pain !

Ceaseless drip of sighing palm-tree,
Though tears are vain ;
But, at dusk, a meadow-lark
Sings in the rain !

IN WINTER

A perfect rose, all a silvered-pink,
Bloomed by my door at morn;
(Life is so sweet, sweet !)
I went to claim it at eventide
But winds had scattered it far and wide;
Silent I stood, forlorn !
(Is life so sweet, sweet ?)

CLEAR SKIES

The fire of the Christmas-flower is quenched
And the earth is bright and sweet with rain;
The dragon-fly crawls on top of his leaf;
Who shall sulk and who distrust again ?

PREJUDICE

December asserts my calendar;
My garden declares it's spring;
I'd rather believe the hyacinths
Than any mere printed thing!



READING IN THE GARDEN

Along the hard, windswept paths of the garden,
December's brown leaf-birds fly, noisily fly;
Four Persian kittens like dervishes chase them,
Or pause to pretend — who knows what?
Who knows why?

A CHRISTMAS DAWN

The bright marvel of the morning star has
 paled ;

All the world is swathed in gloom, in dreams ;

But one steadfast little Star-of-Bethlehem

In the songless, rain-wet garden gleams !

DUALITY

Whenever I step from stone to stone,
By the ancient toy-trees from Hokusai's
 Japan ;
Whenever I climb the wishing-bridge,
I remember I live on a paper-fan !
But I've searched by the pool and by the
 bamboo,
All in vain, for my fan ! Now what would
 you do ?

THE SCHEME ENTIRE

If I had a rose plate and a Ming yellow jar;
A room full of books, a Korin lacquer-box;
If I had a good cook, a new motor-car,
A place out of town, a blue sea with some
 rocks;
If just trifles like these were mine for a
 minute,
I would love this old world and want to stay
 in it !

THE READER

When all the world is a table of books
And the night is never ending;
When the big, white moon is a shaded lamp
And no guests my time are spending;
When essentials like these are arranged for
 me,
How extremely agreeable life will be !

POINTS OF VIEW

My Mother derides as junk and old-iron
These Japanese sword-guards so dear to my
heart ;

She states that they cost four tailor-made
dresses

(Which moths might have eaten !). How
cheap is High Art !

TO A YEIZAN COLOR-PRINT

Ah! this is the way I used to look,
In the golden days of august Japan, —
In five robes of crape, all cherry-bloom ;
With an obi wide ; and a full-moon fan!
Was I not shy? 'T was fashionable then!
See my hair: how amazingly modern 't was
dressed !
Look at my hands ! My tiny, red mouth !
But the way that I managed to walk was the
best !
I remember my gowns were all shockingly
dear
But I had those I needed (eight hundred and
more) ;
So I always looked pretty, no matter the
hour ;
And a lady that pretty was never a bore !

OLD BOOKS

My old, old books that ever wait
In proud humility,
The emeralds of Cortez great
Can never buy of me !

DESTINY

There's never a day, O Love of Mine,
There's never a day for you and me
To meet and to rest beneath Life's Pine;
Forgot by The Seven Gods are we !
Yet on the same lotus, with closed eyes,
We shall dream together in Paradise !

FEBRUARY

Deep is my love for the firelit hearth,
The chosen book in the quiet room, —
Where I may dream all the dreams of life,
Content to wait my long night-of-doom !
But there's a lure in dimpling pools,
The scent of wet blossom and bending pine !
When skies come down and touch the hill,
The ends of the earth they at last are mine !
Not content am I to gaze then through the
 panes :
But, a king, I'm out and away when it rains !

MONA LISA

(My Black Cat)

At life with student-eyes,
You look in sweet surprise
And silence meek ;
When will your schooling end ?
When will you condescend
With me to speak ?
O small Companion of my garden-days,
How very sweet are meditation's ways !

PAGANISM

O to be a mocking-bird,
A mocking-bird,
A-singing in the lane !
O to be a deodar,
A deodar,
A-tossing in the rain !
O to be in tune with life !
O to be in love with life,
Aloof from all the pain !

AFTER THE RAIN

Out in the vineyard, the larks are calling :
“ Arise, O Sleeper, arise, arise !
See San Antonio’s snow-crown glisten
Above your radiant paradise !
The scars, the despairs of summer are gone ;
Laughter is better than sorrow ;
Arise and behold God’s sky and the hills ;
Roses for ev’ry to-morrow ! ”

YELLOW TANAGERS

The enchanting splendor of old, old Peru
In the lemon-tree flashed, one chill day of
rain :

Yellow tanagers, many miles off their course!
Will that breath-taking vision e'er come
again ?

GRAY DAYS

Under a sky of gray, flawless jade,
Orange-trees blossom, red roses fade
And the peacocks scream ;
Dreams hurry back from memory's sea ;
Sunshine subservient now must be
To a rainbow gleam !

A LOS ANGELES SUNSET

O I saw our Three Mountains at sunset
And their snows were a tourmaline fire!
Then they glimmered like opals and faded
To dreams, dreams of forgotten desire!

ADEQUATE

After the dolorous gloom of The Rains,
Red roses of Spring !

Perfectly praised is God's beautiful earth,
For meadow-larks sing !

THE END

Good-bye, good-bye
To a day of shadowed, rose-sweet hours ;
Bitter-sweet charm o' fallen leaf.
Good-bye, good-bye
To my garden of a thousand flow'rs !
O but the year was brief, brief !

*If thy home a garden has not
And an old, old tree;
Whence life's daily joys can come,
Wise men cannot see.*

CHEN HAO-TZU : 1783

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LEAF-SHADOWS
AND ROSE-DRIFT
BEING LITTLE SONGS
FROM
A LOS ANGELES GARDEN
By Olive Perceval